

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a massive multiplayer online gaming (MMOG) software application that performs functions for players of the application based on usable points associated with each of the players, a method of using the points, the method comprising:
5 allocating an amount of meta-points to a first player in the application;
allocating an amount of usable points to a second player, as directed by the first player, wherein the amount of usable points allocated to the second player is specified by the first player and is related to the amount of the first player's meta-points; and
10 enabling functionality within the application for the second player based on the amount of the second player's usable points.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of allocating the amount of usable points comprises allocating usable points based on a conversion factor applied to the meta-points, wherein the conversion factor is based on a rating assigned to the second
15 player by other players.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the allocating the amount of meta-points comprises allocating based on an amount of real time that has elapsed since the first player first accessed the application.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the allocating the amount of meta-points
20 comprises allocating based on an event that occurs within the application.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of allocating the usable points comprises:
receiving a rating for the second player from the first player; and

allocating usable points to the second player based on the rating and based on the meta-points of the first player.

6. The method of claim 5,

5 wherein the step of receiving the rating for the second player from the first player comprises receiving from the first player ratings for a plurality of other players in the game, the plurality of ratings including the rating for the second player, and wherein the plurality of ratings received from the first player are limited based on a bell-curve distribution that prevents the first player from assigning the same rating to each of the other players,

10 further comprising receiving:

a plurality of ratings from the other players for the second player; and

assigning a composite rating to the second player based on the plurality of ratings received from the other players and the rating received from the first player, and

15 wherein the step of allocating the usable points to the second player comprises allocating based on the composite rating.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of allocating usable points comprises:

receiving a designation of the second player as the recipient, from the first player; and

20 allocating usable points to the second player based on an amount of time since the designation was received, wherein the amount of allocated usable points increases as the amount of time since the designation increases.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the allocating the amount of usable points comprises allocating indirectly to the second player by allocating the usable points to a group and then allocating the usable points among the group members, wherein the second player is a member of the group.

5 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the converting comprises converting meta-points to usable points using a conversion factor based on a number of members in the group.

10 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the converting comprises converting meta-points to usable points according to the formula $C = MN(X-1)/X$, where C is the usable points, M is the meta-points, X is a number of members of the group, and N is a multiplier.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the providing functionality comprises allowing the second player to use the usable points as currency that can be exchanged for functionality within the game.

15 12. A method of using points associated with players in a massive, multiplayer online game (MMOG), the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of discrete ratings for a first player from a plurality of other players, wherein the discrete ratings are associated with a rating category;

20 combining the discrete ratings associated with common categories to create combined discrete ratings for the first player for each of the categories;

comparing the combined discrete ratings for the first player to specifications for a game; and

enabling functionality within the game for the first player based on the comparing.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the receiving comprises periodically receiving ratings for the first player from one or more of the other players.

5 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of periodically receiving comprises limiting frequency with which the other players can change discrete ratings given to the first player.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the receiving comprises receiving staggered ratings such that a rating player cannot give the same rating to two players.

10 16. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of enabling functionality comprises:

receiving an amount of usable points from another player, wherein the amount of the usable points is based on a conversion factor related to the combined discrete ratings of the first player; and

15 permitting the first player to exchange the usable points to enable game functionality.

17. A tangible, computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method of using points in a massive multiplayer online gaming (MMOG) software application that performs functions for players of the application based on usable points associated with each of the players, the method comprising:

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allocating an amount of meta-points to a first player in the application;

allocating an amount of usable points to a plurality of other players, as directed by the first player, wherein the amount of usable points allocated to the other players is specified by the first player and is related to the amount of the first player's meta-points; and

5 enabling functionality within the application for the other players based on the amounts of each of the other players' usable points.

18. The medium of claim 17, wherein the step of allocating the amount of usable points comprises allocating the usable points periodically to the other players in a periodic allotment, and wherein the amount of the usable points varies based on a length
10 of time that each of the other players have received the periodic allotments, such that the other players receive more usable points in later periodic allotments than in earlier periodic allotments.

19. The medium of claim 17, wherein the step of allocating the usable points comprises allocating usable points based on a conversion factor applied to the meta-
15 points, wherein the conversion factor is based on ratings assigned to each of the other players.

20. A computer system for performing a method of using points in a massive multiplayer online gaming (MMOG) software application that performs functions for players of the application based on usable points associated with each of the players, the
20 system comprising:

 a memory that stores instructions for using points in the MMOG application; and
 a processor that executes the instructions,

wherein the instructions perform a method comprising:

allocating an amount of meta-points to a first player in the application;
receiving a rating for a second player from the first player, wherein the
first player is able to assign ratings to a plurality of other players in the application, and
wherein the rating is limited by ratings given by the first player to the other players in
the application, such that the first player cannot give the same rating to more than one
other player; and

allocating an amount of usable points to a second player, based on the
rating and the amount of meta-points allocated to the first player; and

enabling functionality within the application for the second player based
on the amount of the second player's usable points.

21. The system of claim 20,
wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a plurality of discrete ratings from the first player for the second
player; and

allocating the usable points to the second player based on the discrete
ratings associated with different categories, wherein the usable points are allocated to
different categories based on the discrete ratings; and

wherein the step of enabling comprises enabling functionality based on the
categories associated with the discrete ratings.

22. The system of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a rating for the second player from each of a plurality of other players;

and

allocating usable points to the second player based on the ratings received from each of the other players.